

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-07

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, IT

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - OTC PROBLEMS IN ITALY

REF : (A) ROME 18861; (B) ROME 17187; (C) ROME 16960

1. DEPT/CAB APPRECIATE THOROUGH EMBASSY REPORTING ON CIVILAVIA ACTIONS RE OTC'S. CAB HAS CURRENTLY NO PENDING REQUESTS FROM ALITALIA FOR OTC FLIGHTS. BOARD STAFF IS CONTACTING INDUSTRY SOURCES FOR FURTHER VERIFICATION OF INFO CONTAINED IN EMBASSY REPORTS ABOUT ALITALIA EFFORTS TO BEGIN OTC'S FLIGHTS. IN LIGHT OF ONA DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING CIVILAVIA APPROVAL FOR OTC'S, ANY ALITALIA FILING OF OTC'S AT CAB WOULD MOST CERTAINLY BE CAREFULLY SCRUTINIZED FOR APPROPRIATE CAB ACTION AGAINST ALITALIA. SINCE ONA APPLICATION APPARENTLY COMPLIED WITH EXISTING ITALIAN CHARTER REGULATIONS, CIVILAVIA DISAPPROVAL APPEARS TO BE DISCRIMINATORY AND CAPRICIOUS.

2. EMBASSY MAY WISH TO MAKE ANOTHER DEMARCHE TO ITALIAN
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AUTHORITIES ON THIS MATTER STRESSING FOLLOWING POINTS:

(1) IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT CIVILAVIA ITC REGULATIONS WERE FULLY COMPLIED WITH IN ONA FILING.

(2) U.S. AUTHORITIES ARE PREPARED TO TAKE APPROPRIATE COUNTERMEASURES AGAINST ALITALIA CHARTERS IF CIVILAVIA REFUSES TO PROVIDE A REASONABLE BASIS FOR ITS DECISION TO TURN DOWN ONA'S OTC CHARTER FLIGHTS.

(3) U.S. AUTHORITIES HAVE HEARD THAT ALITALIA IS SEEKING TO ENTER OTC BUSINESS. CAB WILL FOREWARN ALITALIA WASHINGTON REP THAT CAB TAKES A DIM VIEW OF CIVILAVIA'S REFUSAL TO AUTHORIZE OTC FLIGHTS FILED BY ONA WHICH APPARENTLY COMPLIED WITH ITALIAN REGULATIONS, AND CONSEQUENTLY WILL CONSIDER NECESSARY COUNTERMEASURES AGAINST ALITALIA IF IT SEEKS TO ENGAGE IN SIMILAR OPERATIONS.

3. FYI: SINCE CHARTER MATTERS WILL CERTAINLY BE DISCUSSED DURING FEBRUARY NEGOTIATIONS, BOARD MAY HOLD OFF COUNTERMEASURES AGAINST ALITALIA UNTIL CONCLUSION OF TALKS. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE USEFUL AT THIS STAGE TO INDICATE TO APPROPRIATE ITALIAN AUTHORITIES THAT USG IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT RECENT CIVILAVIA ACTIONS ON OTC REQUESTS OF U.S. CHARTER CARRIERS AND WOULD APPRECIATE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION OF LEGAL BASIS FOR CIVILAVIA'S DENIAL OF ONA'S OTC APPLICATION. KISSINGER

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